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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 073807

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [CVIS](#) [LG](#) [AF](#) [IZ](#)  
RS, GG, UP, BO, PL, EN, LH, SW  
SUBJECT: (U) SECRETARY RICE'S JULY 2, 2008 CONVERSATION  
WITH LITHUANIAN PRIME MINISTER KIRKILAS

[1](#)1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY: DAN SMITH, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE  
SECRETARY, S/ES, DEPARTMENT OF STATE. REASON 1.4. (B)  
AND (D)

[1](#)2. (U) JULY 2, 2008, 10:30 - 11:15, WASHINGTON, D.C.

[1](#)3. (U) PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.  
THE SECRETARY  
AMBASSADOR JOHN CLOUD  
ACTING UNDER SECRETARY JOHN ROOD, T  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY DANIEL FRIED, EUR  
ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY STEVEN MULL, PM  
SEAN MCCORMACK, PA  
STEVE BEECROFT, S  
CAROL BEILMAN WERNER (EUR/NB NOTETAKER)

LITHUANIA  
PRIME MINISTER GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS  
FOREIGN MINISTER PETRAS VAITIEKUNAS  
AMBASSADOR AUDRIUS BRUZGA  
GOVERNMENT CHANCELLOR VALDEMARAS SARAPINAS  
PM ADVISOR NEMIRA PUMPRICKAITE  
PM ADVISOR MINDAUGAS JURKYNAS

[1](#)4. (C) SUMMARY. THE SECRETARY MET WITH LITHUANIAN PRIME  
MINISTER GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS ON JULY 2, 2008 AT THE  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE. KIRKILAS SAID LITHUANIA PLANNED TO  
CONTINUE TO HAVE COMBAT TROOPS IN IRAQ AFTER THE CURRENT  
ROTATION ENDS JULY 31, AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTE STAFF  
OFFICERS AND TRAINERS FOR A TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 40  
SOLDIERS THERE. HE ALSO SAID THAT LITHUANIA EXPECTED TO  
INCREASE ITS SPECIAL OPERATION FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN IN  
THE FALL. THE SECRETARY WELCOMED LITHUANIA'S INTEREST  
IN HOSTING A MD INTERCEPTOR SITE. KIRKILAS SAID THAT IF  
POLAND HOSTED THE SITE, LITHUANIA WOULD BE INTERESTED IN  
OFFERING ZOKNIAI AIRPORT FOR USE IN THE MD SYSTEM, AN  
OFFER THAT THE SECRETARY PROMISED TO DISCUSS WITH  
SECRETARY GATES. KIRKILAS AND THE SECRETARY DISCUSSED  
HELPING GEORGIA OBTAIN A NATO MEMBERSHIP ACTION PLAN  
(MAP) AS WELL AS LITHUANIA'S EFFORTS TO BRING DEMOCRACY  
TO BELARUS. KIRKILAS RAISED LITHUANIA'S DESIRE TO HAVE  
AN ENERGY SECURITY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN VILNIUS AND  
MADE A PITCH FOR LITHUANIA'S JOINING THE VISA WAIVER  
PROGRAM. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRIED AND THE SECRETARY  
POINTED OUT THE NEED FOR LITHUANIA TO ENACT LEGISLATION  
TO RESTITUTE JEWISH COMMUNAL PROPERTY. KIRKILAS NOTED  
PROGRESS ON PROTECTING THE HISTORIC JEWISH CEMETERY IN  
SNIPISKES, VILNIUS. END SUMMARY.

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AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ  
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[1](#)5. (C) KIRKILAS SAID THAT LITHUANIA WAS PROUD OF ITS  
CONTRIBUTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN, PARTICULARLY OF ITS

SPECIAL OPERATION FORCES (SOF) IN THE SOUTH, WHOSE NUMBERS HE EXPECTED TO INCREASE FROM 40 TO 90 IN THE FALL. KIRKILAS DESCRIBED GHOR PROVINCE, WHERE LITHUANIA LEADS A PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM (PRT), AS VERY POOR, WITH MANY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. HE NOTED THAT LITHUANIAN OFFICIALS HAD VISITED A NUMBER OF AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS IN CENTRAL ASIA, WHO UNDERSTOOD THE NEED TO REBUILD THERE. THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT AFGHANISTAN, WITH 4 MILLION MORE PEOPLE THAN IRAQ, HAD AN ANNUAL BUDGET OF ONLY \$678 MILLION - AS COMPARED TO IRAQ'S \$49.5 BILLION.

16. (C) ALLUDING TO THE INTERNAL DEBATE IN HIS CABINET OVER LITHUANIA'S CONTINUED CONTRIBUTIONS TO IRAQ, KIRKILAS ANTICIPATED THAT LITHUANIA WOULD CONTINUE A COMBAT PRESENCE THERE, ALBEIT PERHAPS IN A DIFFERENT FORM. HE REFERENCED HIS MEETING WITH SECRETARY OF DEFENSE GATES THE PREVIOUS DAY AND PROJECTED THAT LITHUANIA COULD END UP WITH 40 SOLDIERS IN IRAQ, INCLUDING STAFF OFFICERS AND TRAINERS. HE FELT THAT THE COALITION WAS MAKING PROGRESS AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO DO WHAT IT COULD TO STABILIZE IRAQ. THE SECRETARY AGREED THAT BOTH THE IRAQI FORCES AND THE COUNTRY ITSELF WERE GETTING STRONGER. SHE THOUGHT THAT HISTORY WOULD SHOW THAT OUR INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ WAS A GOOD DECISION.

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17. (C) KIRKILAS ASKED IF THE SECRETARY WAS PLANNING TO TRAVEL SOON TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO SIGN AN MD AGREEMENT. THE SECRETARY REPLIED THAT AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE SIGNED SHORTLY WITH THE CZECHS. SHE THANKED KIRKILAS FOR LITHUANIA'S STATED WILLINGNESS TO HOST AN MD SITE BUT STRESSED THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS STILL NEGOTIATING WITH POLAND AND HOPED TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT SOON. SHE COMMENTED THAT THE RUSSIANS KNEW THAT THE MD SYSTEM WAS FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES ONLY; THOUGH THEY WERE MAKING NEGOTIATIONS DIFFICULT NOW, THEY WOULD, SHE FELT, ACCEPT THE SYSTEM ONCE COMPLETE.

18. (C) KIRKILAS TOLD THE SECRETARY THAT IF POLAND DECIDED TO HOST THE MD INTERCEPTOR SITE, LITHUANIA WOULD STILL BE INTERESTED IN TAKING ON ANOTHER ROLE IN THE PLANNED MD ARCHITECTURE. HE OFFERED THE USE OF ZOKNIAI AIRPORT, SAYING THAT IT COULD BE OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO THE MD SYSTEM. BOTH THE SECRETARY AND ACTING UNDER SECRETARY ROOD WELCOMED THIS IDEA, WITH THE SECRETARY OFFERING TO DISCUSS LITHUANIA'S PROPOSAL WITH SECRETARY GATES DURING THEIR NEXT WEEKLY LUNCH.

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RUSSIA  
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19. (C) KIRKILAS REMARKED THAT LITHUANIA HAD NEGOTIATED NUMEROUS AGREEMENTS WITH RUSSIA RELATED TO CIVILIAN AND MILITARY TRANSPORT AND INVESTMENT. ASKED HER IMPRESSION OF NEW RUSSIAN PRESIDENT MEDVEDEV, THE SECRETARY REPLIED SHE THOUGHT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE NO CHANGE IN FOREIGN POLICY FOR A WHILE. SHE WONDERED HOW HAVING TWO CENTERS OF POWER IN RUSSIA WOULD WORK, AND ADDED THAT THE TONE OF THE PRESIDENCY MIGHT CHANGE SINCE MEDVEDEV WAS OF A YOUNGER GENERATION, INTERESTED IN THE USE OF THE INTERNET, AND ALLEGEDLY ALSO IN IMPROVING RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW IN RUSSIA. SHE NOTED MEDEVEDEV'S FOCUS ON REFORM PRIOR TO BECOMING PRESIDENT AND HIS GOOD RELATIONS WITH REFORMIST GOVERNORS. HOWEVER, SHE DIDN'T EXPECT THAT HE WOULD EVER SUPPORT NATO MEMBERSHIP ACTION PLANS (MAPS) FOR GEORGIA OR UKRAINE.

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GEORGIA  
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110. (C) KIRKILAS SAID THAT LITHUANIA WAS DOING ALL IT COULD TO HELP GEORGIA AND UKRAINE GET MAPS, BUT HE WORRIED THAT THE SEPARATIST CONFLICTS COULD ENDANGER GEORGIA'S PROSPECTS. LITHUANIA UNDERSTOOD GEORGIA'S

PROBLEMS, SINCE IT HAD HAD TO DEAL WITH SIMILAR THREATS IN 1991. ONLY THE UNITED STATES COULD CONVINCE SAAKASHVILI NOT TO USE FORCE. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT SHE HAD RECENTLY SEEN SAAKASHVILI IN BERLIN. THE GEORGIANS AND ABKHAZ NEEDED TO TALK TO EACH OTHER DIRECTLY. THERE HAD BEEN A GOOD SESSION OF THE "FRIENDS OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR GEORGIA" IN BERLIN ON JUNE 130. IN GENERAL, THE RUSSIANS NEEDED TO STOP THREATENING THE GEORGIANS, THE GEORGIANS NEEDED TO REACH OUT TO THE ABKHAZ, AND THE ABKHAZ NEEDED TO CONSIDER THE GEORGIANS' PEACE PLAN SERIOUSLY. SHE FELT THAT THE POLISH-LED NEW FRIENDS OF GEORGIA GROUP WAS A GOOD IDEA TO PRESSURE THE ORIGINAL FRIENDS TO GET SOMETHING DONE. KIRKILAS RESPONDED THAT LITHUANIA WANTED TO ENCOURAGE EU COUNTRIES TO HELP GEORGIA SO THAT WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN TRANSNISTRIA WOULD NOT HAPPEN IN SOUTH OSSETIA AND ABKHAZIA.

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BELARUS  
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111. (C) THE SECRETARY ASKED IF KIRKILAS SAW ANY HOPE FOR THE OPPOSITION'S SUCCESS IN BELARUS. KIRKILAS THOUGHT IT TOO WEAK AND DIVIDED. LITHUANIA PLANNED TO HELP BELARUS PREPARE FOR ITS OCTOBER PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, BUT IN KIRKILAS' VIEW THE BEST HOPE FOR BELARUS LAY WITH ITS YOUTH. AT THE TIME OF THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SOVIET UNION, BELARUS DID NOT HAVE THE DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE OF THE BALTIC STATES. BELARUSIAN YOUTH NEEDED TO LEARN ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND FREE MARKET ECONOMIES. BY GIVING A HOME TO THE EUROPEAN HUMANITIES UNIVERSITY, BANISHED FROM BELARUS, LITHUANIA WAS NOW PROVIDING 1000 BELARUSIAN STUDENTS WITH A WESTERN-ORIENTED UNIVERSITY EDUCATION. THE LITHUANIAN GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO INVESTING IN RADIO STATIONS AND ROCK CONCERTS ON THE BELARUS-LITHUANIA BORDER TO SPREAD THE WORD TO BELARUSIAN YOUTH.

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ENERGY SECURITY  
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112. (C) KIRKILAS RELATED THAT LITHUANIA WOULD LIKE TO ESTABLISH AN ENERGY SECURITY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN VILNIUS. HAVING DISCUSSED THIS WITH SECRETARY GATES, HE PROPOSED FIRST TO CREATE IT ON A BILATERAL BASIS WITH VARIOUS U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND THEN WORK TO HAVE OTHER NATO MEMBERS JOIN. ASKED WHETHER AN EU ENERGY POLICY WAS MOVING AHEAD, KIRKILAS REPLIED THAT PROGRESS WAS NEGLIGIBLE. HE POINTED OUT THAT LITHUANIA WAS SUBJECT TO ALMOST A 40 PERCENT PRICE INCREASE ON THE GAS IT IMPORTED FROM RUSSIA. HE THEN ENUMERATED LITHUANIA'S PLANS TO DIVERSIFY ITS SOURCES OF ENERGY: BUILDING ELECTRICAL LINKS TO POLAND AND SWEDEN, CONSTRUCTING A NEW NUCLEAR POWER PLANT WITH CO-INVESTORS ESTONIA, LATVIA, AND POLAND, AND BUILDING LNG TERMINALS. HE HOPED FOR U.S. INVESTMENT IN THE LAST TWO PROJECTS AND SAID HE HAD HAD MEETINGS WITH GE AND WESTINGHOUSE THAT WEEK ON THEIR POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION. THE SECRETARY SAID SHE SUPPORTED LITHUANIA'S PLANS.

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VISA WAIVER PROGRAM (VWP)  
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113. (U) THE SECRETARY ASKED HOW THINGS STOOD REGARDING LITHUANIA'S POSSIBLE ENTRY INTO THE VWP. BOTH ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRIED AND AMBASSADOR CLOUD SAID THAT IT LOOKED LIKE THIS YEAR LITHUANIA WOULD BE UNDER THE 10% VISA REFUSAL RATE THRESHOLD REQUIRED BY U.S. LAW. KIRKILAS EMPHASIZED HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS THAT LITHUANIA JOIN THE PROGRAM. THE SECRETARY UNDERScoreD THAT PRESIDENT BUSH UNDERSTOOD THIS AND THAT HE WANTED ALLIES LIKE LITHUANIA TO BE A PART OF IT.

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JEWISH ISSUES  
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¶14. (U) ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRIED ASKED KIRKILAS WHAT THE LITHUANIAN GOVERNMENT WAS DOING ABOUT THE RESTITUTION OF JEWISH COMMUNAL PROPERTY. KIRKILAS SAID THAT THE SITUATION WAS COMPLICATED, REQUIRING TRANSLATION OF THOUSANDS OF PROPERTY DOCUMENTS LOCATED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. HE FELT THAT THE JOB OF RESTITUTION WAS BIGGER FOR LITHUANIA THAN IT HAD BEEN FOR LATVIA AND POLAND. HE ALSO FEARED THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD USE THIS ISSUE AGAINST THE COALITION IN THE UPCOMING OCTOBER PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. AS KIRKILAS HAD TOLD THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE IN NEW YORK ON MONDAY, PARLIAMENTARIANS WOULD BE LOATHE TO DEAL WITH ANY SUCH LEGISLATION BEFORE OCTOBER. THE SECRETARY URGED LITHUANIA TO TAKE CARE OF THIS ISSUE. KIRKILAS ASKED THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONAL JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS TO LOBBY THE "POPULIST" (I.E., OPPOSITION) PARTIES ON THE NEED TO PASS RESTITUTION LEGISLATION. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRIED AND AMBASSADOR CLOUD AGREED TO DO SO.

¶15. (U) KIRKILAS NOTED THAT A GROUND RADAR STUDY WAS UNDERWAY TO DETERMINE THE EXACT BOUNDARIES OF THE HISTORIC SNIPISKES JEWISH CEMETERY IN VILNIUS, WHERE CONSTRUCTION WAS THOUGHT TO BE ENCROACHING ON THE SITE. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY SHOULD BE AVAILABLE MID-AUGUST. HE ADMITTED TO PROBLEMS IN THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THIS ISSUE AND RECOGNIZED THAT JEWISH CULTURE MADE UP AN IMPORTANT PART OF LITHUANIAN HISTORY. HE SAID HE PLANNED TO ENCOURAGE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SYNAGOGUE AND JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER IN VILNIUS.  
RICE